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The Modern Distrust of Insane Asylums

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE GRADUATING EXERCISES OF THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 15, 1887

BY

W. H. MAYS, M.D.

Professor of Mental Diseases, University of California; Superintendent Stockton State Insane Asylum.

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THE MODERN DISTRUST OF INSANE ASYLUMS.

Before us is a class of young men and women, strong in the vigor of youth, and rich in hopes for the future, who are here to-night that their labors may be crowned with recognition, and to receive some last words of counsel as they start out on life's journey. The period of preparation is over, the stage of dependence on others, the life of easy irresponsibility, of careless happiness; all these are now passed. The time for action has come, for achievements, for results. They are entering upon the calling that is to engross their thoughts and energies till they die. "Blessed is he," says Emerson, "who has found his life's work and rejoices in it."

But first let us take advantage of an opportunity that too seldom presents itself to medical men, that of addressing a cultured San Francisco audience on a subject pertaining to our profession. It is one that cannot fail to prove interesting, for it appeals to our common instincts, it belongs to our common humanity. That subject is insanity.

The loss of reason is the greatest calamity that can befall mankind. This pre-eminence has usually been assigned to the arch-destroyer, Death, the "King of Terrors," as he has been called. But compared with hopeless insanity, death is surely the lesser evil. Think what it means to be insane. To him the whole world is, once more, a chaos. To be insane is to perceive no more the song of bird, the hum of busy life, the voices of our fellow-men, all that makes up the happiness of living. It is to heed no more a father's face, a mother's kiss, a sister's tears. It is to receive the lavished affection of those who love him, with indifference, even with hostility. It is to be the prey to horrible fancies, to fantastic delusions, to fearful torments of the imagination. Lower yet, it is to lose all semblance of former self, to sink below the level of the beasts of the field, and to show no more by word or look the Divinity that stirs within us; to become a living log, dead to all the joys and ambitions of life, simply a thing that eats and moves and sleeps.

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But it is not of insanity in its general aspects that I wish to speak to-night. I have an object in view. I want to draw your attention to the attitude of the public generally towards insane asylums, and to endeavor as far as in me lies to remove a portion of the prevalent misconception concerning them. To do so, let us first go back and see how the insane were adjudged and treated in the past.

There was a time when Europe was peopled by hordes of savages as barbarous as any to be found in the South Sea Islands to-day. I am afraid it is of no use disguising the fact that these ancestors of ours were cannibals. Among the remains that have been unearthed in the caves where they sought shelter are found human thigh-bones and arm-bones, which show evidence of having been carefully split open lengthwise by our venerable progenitors, to extract the marrow therefrom. We are the lineal descendants of these barbarians, and if a tendency crops out occasionally among us to rend and devour our fellow-man, metaphorically of course, we have at least the defense that we came by it honestly. Coming down to later and more historical times we reach a period when all the world had but one opinion about insanity, namely, that it meant demoniacal possession.

For a thousand years it was universally held that those who were insane were possessed of an evil spirit. This explanation was accepted unchallenged, everywhere. The insane man was one whose real self had been driven out, and a foul, usurping spirit had taken its place. In the church, the school, the fireside, this was the unanimous teaching; indeed, among the peasantry of many of the enlightened nations to-day, the doctrine, though inert and fangless, still survives. How did it originate?

It is the logical sequence of the common supposition that the mind of man is something separate and apart from his body. Now in speaking of the mind, let it be distinctly remembered that I am not referring to the soul of man, the consideration of which belongs to an entirely different sphere of reasoning. The demon theory of insanity is, I repeat, the natural result of the belief that the mind is an independent entity, inhabiting the body as a sort of tenant at will. I need hardly tell you that this old idea of the duality of an individual is no longer considered tenable. The whole tendency of modern scientific thought goes to show that mind and body are one. Thought is a material process involving a molecular change in the brain cells. The brain is the organ of mind; thought is the

product of that organ. Like every other organ of the body, the brain when in good condition and supplied with healthy blood, performs its function properly; and when not, it functionates improperly or not at all. In the present day the connection between the mind and the brain is not doubted, although precisely how thought is evolved we are still far from knowing. We are not double beings, but, like the French Republic, "one and indivisible."

You can readily see how, among a barbarous people, this belief in the separate existence of the mind or spirit would lead to gross errors. If the spirit was independent of the body, could it not detach itself and leave the body at times during the life of the individual, and during this absence could not one of those wicked spirits ever hovering around take possession of the body and work evil therein? There may be some present who have seen a person in an epileptic fit. The patient suddenly falls and struggles violently. When he comes to, he is ignorant of having struggled. What would be the natural conclusion of the uneducated mind? Why, that the real spirit or rightful occupant had been absent and a bad spirit had entered and tormented his body. This explanation of epilepsy was, and is, universal among half-civilized peoples. In the Arabic language the same word signifies both epilepsy and demoniacal possession, so unquestionably are they considered one and the same thing. So also the simple physiological acts of yawning and sneezing showed the temporary presence of an intruding spirit, who made the person do what he never designed to do. He did not will the sneeze; it was sneezed without his concurrence or volition: who did it then? In Mohammedan countries it is a common thing, when a person sneezes, for the bystander to exclaim, "Allah protect you!" and a similar custom, that of invoking a blessing upon the victim of a sneeze, may occasionally be observed with old country people among ourselves. Again, with regard to coughing: Major Powell, the celebrated traveler, states that with the Utes a cough is an indication that a spirit of evil has entered the sufferer's stomach. To dislodge it, the medicine man would stretch out his patient on the ground and scarify his body with eagles' claws.

So also with sleep. During the hours of slumber the spirit of the sleeper was supposed to be absent, or off guard, and the danger of a malicious demon stepping in and occupying its place was then most

to be dreaded. For when the savage awoke from vivid dreams, he found it hard to persuade himself that he had not been enacting real scenes somewhere else.

But insanity? If epilepsy and the ordinary reflex phenomena of coughing, sneezing and yawning were taken by our primitive ancestors as evidence of the presence of an intruding spirit, in how much more emphatic a sense was insanity so regarded. Look at the actions of the insane man. This is no temporary usurpation; his subtle enemy has been foully and inextricably in the toils. Could anything be more convincing? Here is a man, prominent in his tribe, a great warrior, foremost in war, foremost in council. Now see him. He does not recognize even his nearest relations. His child that he cherished so tenderly, if not prevented he would tear it limb from limb. He laughs and shouts without cause. He addresses some one whom the bystanders cannot see; he strikes out wildly at an invisible foe; he shrinks in terror at the approach of some unseen enemy. O no, it is not he; it is some malignant demon that has got possession of him. For has he not slain his hundreds in battle? Are not their avenging spirits ever swarming round, seeking an opportunity to step in and wreak vengeance on their slayer? See, it throws him to the ground, it dashes him headlong against the rocks. Ill-fated man! This comes of sleeping too soundly, or perhaps from omitting to pay the customary tribute to the good medicine man, whose function it is to propitiate these bad spirits, or by spells and incantations to drive them away.

The medicine man of the tribe was *ex officio* the exorcist, or caster-out of devils. The methods resorted to for that purpose by different nations form an interesting and suggestive study. In Sumatra the insane man is put into a hut, and the hut set fire to. The wicked spirit, being much afraid of fire, vacates his earthly tenement at once and in great haste, finding the place too hot to hold him. I need not say that the unfortunate lunatic generally perishes in the flames, a minor contingency which his countrymen do not consider cuts much figure in the case. The noted historian, H. H. Bancroft, of this city, tells of a tribe of Pacific Coast Indians, whose medicine man endeavors to frighten the unclean spirit out of the insane man by sitting in front of him and barking like an angry dog for hours together. He mentions other tribes who administer nauseous emetics for the purpose. In another tribe the method is to

press heavily with both fists into the pit of the patient's stomach and expel the unwelcome visitor by main force.

Such then was the doctrine of demoniacal possession. Reflect how, under such a hypothesis, a half-civilized people would treat their insane. If the gods had so punished these persons, how shall man presume to befriend them? They were shunned as accursed. Driven out from the dwellings of man, they lived the lives of hunted animals; beyond the pale of human sympathy and human help. In the universal horror inspired by the supernatural nature of their disorder, they were deserted by their own relatives; the ties of kindred forgotten, their own flesh and blood turned against them. Surely, it may be urged, nothing can suppress the natural affection in the human heart. Could a father drive away his stricken son to suffer and perish? Yes. For it was no longer he: true it was his external shape, but his real self was gone and a foul fiend was masquerading in its place. So instead of the loving care his helpless condition required, this wretched superstition froze up the natural feelings at their fount aud left in their place a stern and pitiless hate. The very presence and contact of a lunatic constituted a dangerous paltering with the powers of evil. Mothers would hide their infant's face at his approach, lest the malignant spirit that looked through his eyes should smite the child with blindness or death.

Yet even then, if the world has been content to leave these poor sufferers alone, if it has done no more than turn its back upon them and let them live as outcasts and wanderers, the tale I am telling would be shorn of half its sadness. But a new feeling awoke. Towards the Middle Ages an accession of fanatical fury occurred, and thousands of demented creatures were ruthlessly put to death as possessed of the devil. Judges would gravely listen to the incoherent babblings of the lunatics arraigned before them, and, claiming that they were condemned out of their own mouths, sentence them to death by scores. And then, a little later on, the awful spectre of witchcraft begins to rear its blood-stained front, and with it the history of the treatment of the insane becomes mingled and blended. For the vast majority of the witches and warlocks whom it was thought to be doing God a service to kill off, were simply insane. Five-sixths, it has been estimated, of those who were burnt at the stake as witches, were merely harmless lunatics. It is a humiliating story to look back upon. The past has many dark pages recording

human error and wrong, but there is none so revolting as the page that details the history of witchcraft. Nowhere in all the annals of man's inhumanity to man is there anything approaching it in sheer, wanton, insensate cruelty. I venture to say that no one in my audience can read the account of it in Lecky or Draper, and not rise from the perusal burning with shame, and with a touch of Thomas Carlyle's contempt for his species. Witch-finders swarmed over the countries of Europe and New England, armed with power to convict and punish any one they might fasten their suspicions upon. It was enough for any old woman that she was bent with age, haggard and ugly; particularly if her mind was weakening under its load of years, as so often happens to the aged, and her talk was strange and rambling. Her doom was sealed. For had not a murrain broken out among the cattle? Had not the church steeple been stricken by lightning? Had not her next-door neighbor's child died in spasms? It is recorded of one poor crazy woman who was burnt as a witch in a town in Scotland as late as 1722, that, when the fagots were kindled round her, and while the flame was yet small, she laughed and clapped her hands in glee, shouting: "See, what a bonny fire! what a bonny fire!" so little did her feeble intellect comprehend the meaning of it all. But soon the flames grew stronger and her childish laughter changed to piteous shrieks, and so she died.

The number executed for witchcraft is so great as to almost exceed belief. Historians place it variously at from thirty to fifty thousand. But this we know, that for hundreds of years, in every city and town of Christendom the chief amusement on holidays was the burning of a witch or wizard, or perhaps a batch of them, in the public square. Nearly all of them were madmen or madwomen, who if living now would be spending their days in the comfort and protection of an insane asylum. Judges and public functionaries would vie with each other in the "good work," and boast of the number they had put to death annually.

One of the first to raise his voice against this hideous butchery was a physician, John Wier, of Cleves. He boldly asserted that these so-called witches and warlocks were lunatics, and not responsible, and called upon the magistrates to protect them instead of dooming them to death. Later on, another physician, Dr. Pigray, of Paris, interposed against the wholesale slaughter of the insane, and struck a blow in their defense whose echo reverberated across Europe. He

was the king's surgeon, and when on one occasion fourteen witches were condemned to be burnt, and an appeal was made to the Parliament of Paris in their behalf, the Parliament appointed Dr. Pigray to examine these witches, "and see whether they had the mark of the devil on them." The worthy doctor reported that there was no mark of the devil on them that he could find, but that they were feeble-minded women, whose gray hairs should entitle them to sympathy, and who had more need of food and treatment than they had of punishment. They were set free. It was not, however, until the early part of the eighteenth century that executions for witchcraft ceased to disgrace the world. The downfall of witchcraft, after reigning absolute in people's minds for three hundred years, was one of the most rapid reversals of public opinion the world ever saw. Although of course there had been a silent preparation for it, it seemed that the whole fabric suddenly fell like a house of cards.

In considering the witchcraft executions, there may be something to be said on the other side. It was claimed that no principle of law was better sustained both by divine* and the highest human authority.† Moreover, before condemning too severely, let us not forget that it is unfair to judge a past age by the thoughts and feelings of the present. But for the guilt of shedding innocent blood there is no past or present: crime such as this is crime, yesterday, to-day and forever. No plea of "custom of the age" can relieve mankind of the obloquy of these long continued judicial murders. The slaughter of defenseless old women, not by untutored savages and in a remote age, but by the foremost nations of the earth, and sixteen hundred years after the great Exemplar had brought his message of love to the world, is a stain that our race will wear, like Cain, in shame upon its front to all succeeding ages.

The first lunatic asylum, known as Bedlam, was established in London in the middle of the sixteenth century. But for a long time Bedlam was nothing more than a horrible prison. The patients were huddled together in cages like wild beasts, and exhibited to sight-seers at a penny a head. Numbers of them were sent out as licensed beggars. If a lunatic was found to be harmless, an iron ring was welded round his arm as a badge, and he wandered over the country subsisting on charity. He was known as "Tom o'Bedlam."

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* "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."—*Deuteronomy.*

† *E. g.*, Sir Matthew Hale, Blackstone, etc.

You remember in *King Lear*, how Edgar, feigning madness, styles himself "poor Tom;" "Tom's a-cold." In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the condition of the insane was deplorable in the extreme. Those who were not summarily executed as possessed of the devil were kept in underground cells, clad in filthy rags, fed on offal, and lashed into obedience by the keeper's whip. The words of Rosalind in *As You Like It*, show the popular estimation of insanity in Shakspeare's day. "Love," says the bantering Rosalind, "is merely a madness, and deserves the dark house and the whip as madmen do." Nor can the eighteenth century boast of much advancement in this respect. Though no longer burnt on market places and village greens, the insane were still barbarously treated. The right of existence was granted them, and that was about all. It was not until the century was drawing to its close that we find any indications of a humane feeling for the insane.

Picture to yourself an asylum of a hundred years ago. Imagine a collection of low, damp dungeons, without light or air, with a bunch of rotten straw for a bed. Imagine human beings, sometimes to the number of six or eight, crowded in one of these cells, chained to the wall by heavy manacles which lacerated their limbs, clad in rags, with ferocious keepers, chosen from among convicts, mocking them with insulting gibes, mercilessly beating them, throwing before them insufficient and disgusting food, leaving them without water to quench their thirst, or covering to ward off the cold of winter. Nothing was to be heard but the clinking of chains, the oaths of the keepers, and the shrieks of some poor victim under the scourge. This picture is not overdrawn. Its analogue could have been found anywhere in Europe throughout the eighteenth century. Who can wonder, thinking of these scenes of desolation and misery, that the dread and distrust of asylums has been handed down and still remains in the hearts of the people, although the conditions giving rise to that distrust have entirely disappeared.

But at the opening of the nineteenth century the seeds of coming improvement had been sown and were bearing fruit. During the storm and stress of the French Revolution, in the heat of that great uprising for human freedom and brotherhood, the movement had its birth; springing from the brain of one whose name, like Ben Adhem's, stands foremost on the roll of "those who loved their fellow-men," the illustrious Dr. Pinel. He pleaded the cause of the better

treatment of the insane before the National Assembly, until opposition melted away; and then, with trustful hands, struck off the chains from hundreds of patients in the Paris asylum, and led them out once more into the light of day. Then other asylum physicians, in France, England, Germany and America, took up the work and devoted their energies to it. The debt that humanity owes to Drs. Pinel, Conolly, Chiarugi, Tuke, Hill and Ray, deserves more than an ephemeral recollection, for unlike many for whom the trumpet of fame sounds its loudest, they left the world better than they found it. A new epoch dawned. Gathering force from the great moral awakening that characterized the early part of our century, the movement grew like a snowball, until the humane treatment of the insane became the established rule in every civilized country of the globe. No greater victory was ever won. It is the glory of the present era that the State reaches out kind hands to protect and succor those whose mental condition renders them unable to care for themselves. The modern hospital for the insane embodies the highest conception of the charity and philanthropy of the age. Nowhere under the sun will you find the Golden Rule, that lofty and infallible guide of conduct: "Do to others as you would have others do to you," nowhere can it be found more perfectly exemplified and carried out than in the wards of a well-regulated asylum.

How then shall we account for the suspicious feeling that seems to pervade the public mind with regard to insane asylums? How are we to account for the ready credence given to stories of cruelty and outrage, stories either coined from the distorted brain of some half-cured patient, in which the real and the unreal are inextricably mixed, or else the malicious invention of some discharged employé? Why do people who in other affairs of life exercise a wise reservation of judgment, join at once in the chorus of detraction? What is the cause of this deep-rooted distrust on the part of the public generally?

The answer is not far to seek. It is a survival. It is the residue of a once prevalent habit of thought, of a feeling that once had good reason to exist. The traditions of centuries are not overthrown in a day. For a thousand years the very conception of insanity was enough to strike terror to the stoutest heart. For hundreds of years a lunatic asylum was the most loathsome and dreadful of prisons, the abode of suffering and misery far transcending any vision of wretchedness depicted by Dante. Deep into the substrata of the brain of

the people at large was stamped, generation after generation, the impress of these horrors, until the memory of them has become part of its structure, and is handed down like an instinct. It is this heritage that the modern asylum has to contend against. It is this prejudice, born of the mystery and dread that once surrounded mental alienation, that still survives, as old prejudices often will survive, long after the circumstances that gave them birth have vanished from off the earth.

Thus to some extent, the mental attitude of a former age still holds sway, the past overlapping the present. Explain it as we may, the anachronism is not creditable to the enlightenment of to-day. I will say, however, that the asylums of this State have never been submitted to the severe onslaughts that many of the Eastern institutions have been subjected to. The bitterness of these assaults has, in some instances, been almost incredible, and although the charges have nearly invariably proved frivolous and groundless, the result has been, in a great degree to shake public confidence in the asylum system. Dr. Chapin of Philadelphia, referring to a recent legislative investigation of charges made against an asylum, says: "If the hallucinations of the inmates of insane hospitals are to be received as competent evidence, if reputable physicians and humane gentlemen who act as trustees, are to be dragged before the public and exposed to harsh criticism, whenever an uncured lunatic chooses to make a statement of cruelties, the whole system of insane hospitals will become a failure." I have a lively recollection of a case in point that occurred in my own experience lately. A young man, recovering from acute mania, was brought to me for a final interview before discharge. He said he had one complaint to make, and only one, and that was about the manner in which he had been brought into the asylum. He had been thrown headlong out of the carriage, he said, and dragged by the feet up the stone steps of the building, amid the jeers of a crowd of bystanders. Now it so happened that I was present at the admission of this patient, and remembered the circumstances clearly. I saw him, a frenzied maniac, lifted gently from the vehicle and conducted carefully into the reception-room, walking with the support of an attendant on either side. Yet this man goes forth, sane on other points, to spread his preposterous story before the world, to ears too ready to receive it. The incident made a deep impression on me, illustrating so forcibly the general character of charges made against asylums

The effect of an attack upon a great public charity is often pernicious and far-reaching. It injures the discipline of the institution and throws out of order the machinery of organization. It spreads demoralization throughout the ranks of employés and patients. It discourages the medical officers and benumbs their enthusiasm. It distresses those who have relatives in the asylum, adding seriously to their pain and apprehension. There is an honest criticism that all public institutions ought to court. There is a proper attitude of vigilance on the part of the people, regarding the administration of public trusts, that should not be relaxed, or abuses will creep in. Mr. George William Curtis has said: "The surest defense of every great public interest is the turning on of the great public light. To every community, as to every individual, comes the old question, Where is Abel, thy brother?" With this healthy watchfulness and supervision, I am fully in accord; indeed it is the lack of knowledge on insanity matters that is at the root of the prevalent misjudgment. If the people generally would visit their asylums more, and inform themselves how the insane live and move and have their being, there would be a much more rapid sloughing off of preconceived conclusions and antiquated beliefs. A movement has been made by some benevolent persons in this city to establish a State Board of Charities, to look after the condition and needs of the inmates of our charitable institutions. I wish the movement God speed.

Again, I am frank to admit that incompetent men will sometimes find their way into positions of grave public trust, but in nine cases out of ten where this occurs, it is the outcome of political meddling. It is where the department has been used for party purposes, and has been made a part of the political machine. To the credit of our State it may here be said that for the last fifteen years the California insane asylums have been absolutely emancipated from political interference; thanks to that high-minded man who inaugurated the principle, Governor Haight.

I have shown how insanity was regarded in the past. I have described the tremendous though silent revolution that has been accomplished iu the management of the insane; how harshness and neglect have given way to kindness and benevolence. Looking at the asylum of to-day it is hard to realize what the care of the insane once was. Buildings of an attractive appearance are now erected, with spacious halls and home-like appointments, where all is done that

art and skill can devise to help the patient towards recovery, to ameliorate his lot, and to render his surroundings pleasant and comfortable. To whom belongs the credit of bringing about this wonderful change? I claim unhesitatingly that the credit belongs in the main to the medical profession.

It was the medical profession that first called attention to the fact that the lunatic was simply a fellow-being afflicted with a bodily disease. It was our profession who first lifted over him a protecting arm and invoked the law in his behalf. It was medical men who, when the world was calling him fiend and devil, and casting him to the flames for the crime of being weak-minded, first cried shame upon the inhuman cruelty and demanded a halt. It was a physician who first struck the chains from their limbs and led them from dungeon and kennel into the light of day. It was our profession, especially that section of it that devotes itself to asylum work, who advocated the present humanitarian asylum system, which will stand to future ages as the noblest moral triumph of the times. It is the result of the efforts of medical men, the work of their hearts and brains. Our profession has ever, as far back as you choose to turn, been in advance of popular opinion on this subject; it has ever occupied a higher plane of thought with regard to the insane than have the people at large. Seventy or eighty years ago a stoutly contested fight was being waged in advocacy of the rights of the insane; on the one hand was the medical profession, aided by many non-medical philanthropists, on the other the forces of ignorance, tradition, parsimony and officialism; and it was not until our century had run half its course that the victory was fully won. Every improvement in the construction and equipment of asylums that has been made during the last fifty years, every innovation for raising the standard of service therein, every new measure or suggestion for furthering the happiness of the inmates, has originated with asylum physicians and has been accomplished through their unflagging zeal.

An error is tenacious of life, because there is so often in the heart of it a germ of truth, around which the error has clustered and crystallized. The popular view of insanity, erroneous though it be, has, as I have shown, good grounds for its existence. But with the expansion of knowledge that characterizes the period in which we live, there should come an end to this false sentiment of fear and

repulsion. A better practical understanding of insanity will cause many an obsolete idea to be discarded, just as the doctrine of demonism has been dropped as out of harmony with widening information and intelligence. The old horror of insanity will then disappear, and it will be seen that the large majority of the insane are but children, to all intents and purposes, who require to be treated with the same kindness and forbearance that you show your little ones at home; children, yet the story of whose lives is often infinitely more sad and pathetic than anything novelist ever wrote or poet conceived; children, upon whose sinless heads a father's sin has been visited, even to the third and fourth generation.

I therefore claim for the hospitals for the insane a place in public estimation commensurate with the great charitable work they are doing. Let me go further, and express a hope that a large portion of this audience who perhaps have never thought deeply on the subject before, may be reckoned henceforth as friends, not neutrals merely, but active friends of our State asylums.

But to turn to the matter more immediately before us.

It is a source of pride to me that my own Alma Mater, the Medical School of the University of California, presents for graduation every year one or more of the gentler sex. It was one of the first in the country to open its doors to women. In the pursuit of science there should be no distinction of sex. In my experience the female medical students are as quick to learn and as thorough in their mental grasp as their male classmates. The whole current of ideas as to whether women can do or ought to do men's work, has been changed in the last twenty-five years. This result was mainly brought about by the determination of a few women of unusual strength of purpose to enter the medical profession. The story need not here be told of the incredible and humiliating difficulties they had to encounter. But they won, after a bitter fight, and the spell was broken. Down fell the barriers, and not only medicine but many other fields of activity are now lying open to women, which were once considered unfit for them. Of these newer avocations none so befits her as the practice of medicine. In it she finds scope for those qualities and endowments peculiar to her sex. In the sick room, by the bedside, in the hospital and asylum wards, she can call into play for the benefit of suffering humanity that special genius for ministration that is at once the monopoly and the crowning glory of woman.

Considering that their admission to the ranks of physicians is only a thing of yesterday, the success of female practitioners of medicine is one of the most remarkable social facts of the day. Taking a hundred graduates of either sex, it will be found that as many women as men have built up lucrative practices, have risen to honor in the profession, and have shown, by their contributions to the medical journals and otherwise, a marked ability in the line of original observation and research.

Of advice, either practical or otherwise, there is but little that I deem necessary to say to you at this parting of our ways. One thing, however, let me urge. Be good to the poor. When you visit them, leave behind you medicine for their immediate wants. Every doctor should carry a pocket-case filled with such drugs as are most commonly used, and should be ready to measure out a supply at the bedside. One or two doses of a certain remedy are often all that is required. The spectacle of a physician, in the poorer neighborhoods of this city, amid destitution and poverty, loftily writing a prescription, is not a pleasing one. The bread-winner of a large family is down sick perhaps, the only source of income shut off, and the fifty or seventy-five cents to pay the druggist must come out of the last few hoarded dollars that stand between them and actual want. I do not see how he can reconcile it to his conscience. The custom of putting a little medicine in a tumbler of water and directing the administration of a teaspoonful, and so on, is easily fallen into, and will add to your good name and popularity.

Remember that you are doctors, not simply physicians. A physician is one who gives physic, but the term doctor, is really a higher and better one. I trust you will be something more than mere givers of physic. The word doctor literally means teacher. It is as a teacher that you will have special opportunities of usefulness, aside from the routine of medicine. The ancients wisely regarded as the *summum bonum* of earthly things "a sound mind in a sound body." It is for you to point the way to this great desideratum. Preventive medicine and sanitary science are assuming enormous proportions. By preventing disease, it falls within our province to curtail the causes of human mortality. In the water we drink, in the air we breathe, lurk the invisible hosts of Death. We must all die, but the majority of us die too soon. Of every ten persons who die, seven of them succumb to external and preventable causes; to causes that

can be diverted and that ought to be diverted. Therefore I charge you instruct the people, in season and out of season, how better to obey nature's laws, the laws of hygiene and ventilation, the laws of temperance and cleanliness, that their days may be long in the land. Tell them that although for some reason a commandment against drunkenness was omitted from the Decalogue, no vice is more certain to entail physical as well as moral ruin. Tell them that not only self-indulgence, but even passion and bad temper will react injuriously on the bodily health; that overwork and worry slay their thousands every year; that a healthy and vigorous vitality may often be gained by the cultivation of a cheerful serenity, and is stimulated by genial companionship and the delight of happy laughter. This is the gospel that you are sent out to teach and to preach. Then there is the gospel of fresh air and sunshine. Of all the old systems of religion wherewith the human soul in ages past has satisfied its eternal longings, the Sun-worshippers have my respect. To them the sun was the giver of all power, of all life, of all good, the source and origin of all that throbs and moves on the broad bosom of mother Earth. So at early morning they would kneel on their little squares of carpet reverently facing the east, waiting for the first flush of dawn to illuminate the sky. Then when "night's candle is put out and jocund day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops," they rose and voiced their praise to the glorious sun as he leaped above the horizon, piercing the shadows with his shafts, pouring brightness over hill and dale, and dimpling into laughter the far-off multitudinous seas. Let us be sun-worshippers, not in the ceremonial sense of the ancient Persians, but with that higher worship that finds expression in deeds of daily life. As a people, we ought to be out of doors more, if not in the sunshine, at least in the open air that has been quickened and purified by the solar rays.

To you who have now been graduated I have some words of praise. When I say that as a class you have shown yourselves to be above the average in ability, I am uttering the consensus of opinion of the whole professorial corps. It has been a class of plodders, and it is proverbial that your plodding student amounts to more in the world than your brilliant student. In my experience, no senior class ever followed their work with more fixity of purpose, with more pertinacity, and none ever reached a higher plane as regards the whole round of studies than the class of '87. If your careers at College

afford any indication of your futures, you are going to succeed, all of you.

In the grand army of medicine you are enrolled as its newest recruits. How many of you will be content to remain among its rank and file? Who among you will become captains and leaders? The field that lies open before you is rich and boundless. Medicine is pushing to the front among the professions. It is becoming more and more an exact science, with foundations laid broad and deep that cannot be shaken. Never was investigation prosecuted with more eagerness, never was experiment pushed deeper into the heart of things. But there is yet much to be done. Cancer, consumption and a few other maladies still defy the resources of our art, and imperishable fame awaits him who discovers and compels them to yield up their secret. It will not be long first. The profession which during the present generation has numbered among its achievements Ovariotomy, Anesthesia, Antiseptic Surgery and Bacteriology, will continue to advance and conquer. I trust you will, each and all, become part of this great movement.

In the hands of you new-comers rests the good name of our honored calling. Show by your daily lives that physicians are a force in the world for higher things as against lower. What are the distinguishing traits of the good physician? Untiring devotion to the sick, heroic fearlessness in presence of danger or pestilence, conscientious discharge of professional duty, careful attention to the public health, steadfastness, manliness, self-sacrifice, courtesy, tenderness;—these are the qualities that mark the good physician, and often win for him the respect and almost filial affection of the community. Trusting that you will all prove to be good physicians, in the higher sense of the term, I will close.

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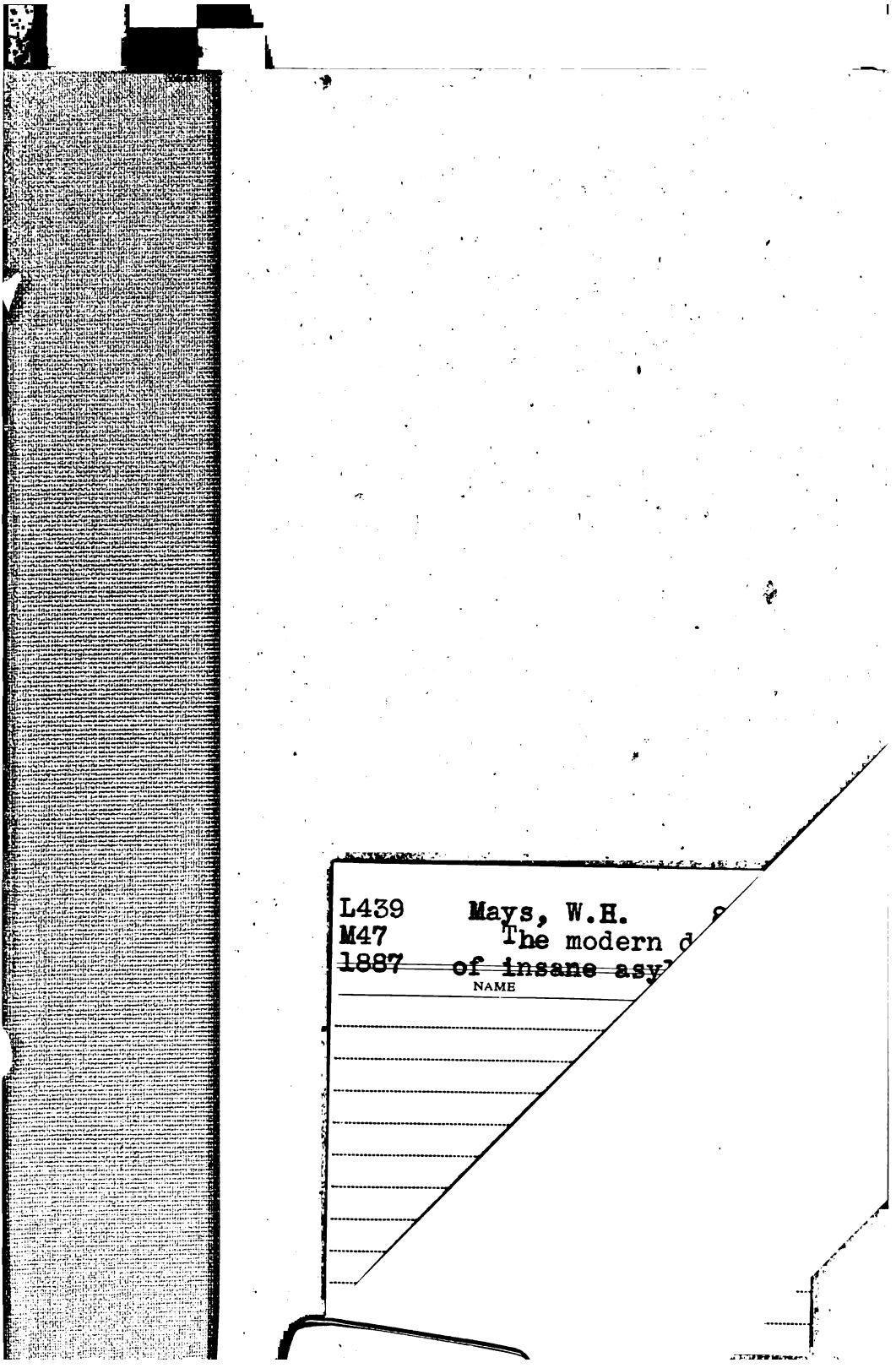
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